

# California Conservation Programs

U.S. Department of Agriculture  
Natural Resources Conservation Service



## WHO IS THE NRCS

The USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) is the federal agency that works with private landowners to help them protect their natural resources and keep the watersheds healthy. The agency emphasizes voluntary, science-based assistance, partnerships, and cooperative problem solving at the community level.

In California some two thirds of the private land is made up of agricultural cropland, pasture, and

rangeland. Thus, NRCS conservationists spend much of their time working with farmers and ranchers. The agency also works in close cooperation with Resource Conservation Districts and other community leaders.

NRCS brings landowners needed technical and financial tools to plan and fund conservation practices and projects to protect the natural resources found throughout the watershed.

## WHAT IS A WATERSHED

The landscape is made up of many interconnected basins, or watersheds, allowing water to run to the lowest point – a stream, a river, a lake, or ocean. As water travels to the lowest point it crosses farm fields, forests, suburban lawns, and city streets—or it may seep into the soil and travel as ground water. Everyone lives in a watershed and

shares resources and resource concerns with those in their watershed community. Some of these concerns include flood and drought prevention, erosion and sediment control, water quality, water conservation, wildlife habitat, wetland restoration, recreation and rural development.

## About Natural Resources Conservation Service



### USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service

430 G Street #4164 • Davis, CA 95616-5475

For more information contact your local USDA Service Center listed in the telephone directory under Federal Government Agencies or at **[www.ca.nrcs.usda.gov](http://www.ca.nrcs.usda.gov)**

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) prohibits discrimination in all its programs and activities on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, religion, age, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation, or marital or familial status. (Not all prohibited bases apply to all programs). Persons with disabilities who require alternative means for communication of program information (Braille, large print, audiotape, etc.) should contact the USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TDD).

To file a complaint, write USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, Room 326 W. Whitten Building, 14th and Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, DC 20250-9410 or call (202) 720-5964 (voice and TDD). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.



# Conservation Programs in Your Watershed



## Environmental Quality Incentives Program

EQIP promotes agricultural production and environmental quality as compatible goals. Through this voluntary program, farmers and ranchers may receive financial and technical help to install or implement structural and management conservation practices on their land.

## Wetlands Reserve Program

WRP restores wetland, upland and riparian complexes to improve habitat for migratory birds. The objectives of this program are to purchase conservation easements from willing sellers, restore and protect wetlands in agricultural settings, and assist landowners with the restoration of wetland hydrology and wildlife habitat.



## Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program

WHIP encourages the voluntary establishment of high quality wildlife habitat on private lands. While some NRCS programs are specifically designed for agricultural lands, WHIP offers technical and financial help for all private landowners or local units of government who wish to plan and develop upland, wetland, riparian, or aquatic habitat on their property.

## Farmland Protection Program

FPP helps farmers keep their productive land in agriculture. This program assists states, tribes, local governments and non-profit organizations by purchasing conservation easements for the purpose of limiting land conversion to non-agricultural uses.



## Resource Conservation and Development Program

RC&D assists communities to care for and protect their natural resources in a way that will improve the area's economy, environment and living standards. It provides a way for community members to initiate, sponsor, plan and implement projects that will make their area a better place to live.

## Emergency Watershed Protection Program

EWP provides technical and financial assistance for watersheds ravaged by natural disasters. This program provides funding for work such as clearing debris from clogged waterways, restoring vegetation, and stabilizing riverbanks.



## Conservation Technical Assistance

CTA provides technical assistance to voluntary participants interested in planning and carrying out conservation activities to address local natural resource issues. NRCS staff work with land-users and communities to provide resource solutions throughout the watershed. CTA provides the science-based technical assistance needed to create long-term resource solutions at the local level.

